# BOMBING SERBIA INTO SUBMISSION

A Review Essay by CONRAD C. CRANE

#### NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment

by Benjamin S. Lambeth Santa Monica, California: RAND, 2001. 276 pp. \$20.00 [ISBN 0-8330-3050-7]

#### The Conflict Over Kosovo: Why Milosevic Decided to Settle When He Did

*by Stephen T. Hosmer*Santa Monica, California: RAND, 2001.
155 pp. \$20.00
[ISBN: 0–8330–3003–5]

The conflict in Kosovo spawned numerous accounts of NATO airpower in Allied Force. Even though two RAND Project Air Force studies tout the success of bombing in persuading President Slobodan Milosevic to agree to a settlement, there are significant differences in their analyses. But their conclusions are provocative and troubling.

Benjamin Lambeth is a well regarded expert on Soviet airpower and recent air campaigns. NATO's Air War for Kosovo: A Strategic and Operational Assessment is an expanded version of a chapter in The Transformation of American Airpower, published in 2001. The author details the debate between General Wesley Clark, USA, Supreme Allied Commander Europe, and Lieutenant General Michael Short, USAF, the air component commander. The former favored concentrating on Serb forces in Kosovo, while the latter wanted to destroy high-value targets in Belgrade with heavy attacks. Lambeth considers the eventual campaign—the combined approach developed by Clark with incremental escalation intended to maintain Allied solidarity—as a mistake influenced by exaggerating the impact of airpower on the Dayton Accords.

Lambeth does not consider the disjointed air operations launched to help Kosovo worthy of the designation *campaign*. But the bombing revealed weaknesses in NATO capabilities, especially

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electronic warfare and suppression of air defenses, flexible targeting of ground forces, and interoperability. Serb air defenses remained a threat throughout, and the air war had almost no effect on actions by Serb forces within Kosovo. Despite these deficiencies and the wrong strategy, the ability of airpower to destroy fixed dual military-civilian infrastructure targets in Yugoslavia, helped by the indictment of Milosevic and the loss of international support, eventually induced the dictator to accept the terms offered by the Alliance

While the strength of the analysis by Lambeth is its operational assessment of Allied Force, Stephen Hosmer advances a particularly comprehensive strategic analysis of the air war impact in The Conflict Over Kosovo: Why Milosevic Decided to Settle When He Did. He sets out to explain why Milosevic did not settle earlier or hold out longer and argues that the Serb leader believed that accepting the Rambouillet terms would endanger his regime and that NATO could not conduct a sustained air campaign because of Russian pressure and coalition weakness. He expected to get better terms by holding out.

Hosmer argues that Milosevic and his henchmen eventually conceded because they viewed the Allied offer of June 3 as an ultimatum preceding a genocidal air campaign that would devastate Yugoslavia. The gradual Allied buildup, escalating attacks, and bombing of targets that the Serbs considered to be civilian persuaded them that the coming assault

would cause immense hardship and imperil their rule. Milosevic believed his war-weary people would support a decision to avoid more intensive bombing; moreover, he could maintain that the new terms were less severe than the conditions offered at Rambouillet. Unlike Lambeth, Hosmer believes the gradual increase in bombing allowed pressure to build, which would not have happened if Short had been allowed to hit harder earlier. It also ensured the solidarity of the Alliance, which was the center of gravity for the coalition.

The authors differ over the lessons for jointness. Lambeth laments the loss of the ground option at the beginning of the air campaign. But its main use would have been to prevent Serb ground targets from dispersing to hide from bombs, and the errant strategy achieved the desired results anyway, though with considerable delay. Some have argued that signs of an impending land invasion helped persuade Milosevic to settle, but Lambeth discounts the possibility because no ground attack could have been executed for months. Hosmer, in contrast, concludes that the ground threat persuaded the Russians to abandon the Serbs and voice dire warnings of an intense NATO assault, magnifying Serb fears of attack and of diplomatic isolation. The motivations and effects of Russian actions deserve further study.

By contrast, Stephen Hosmer takes the lessons learned too far, reading into

history that airpower had been the main coercive instrument in Japan, Korea, Vietnam, Iraq, and Bosnia. Still, the experience of Kosovo offers provocative insights for the future. As much as Lambeth wants to use the Gulf War as the model for the proper application of airpower, future opponents are much more likely to be as smart as the Serbs than as inept as the Iragis. And Lambeth concedes that political constraints will probably make gradualism the standard method for applying military force. He wants the Air Force to increase its targeting capabilities against ground forces but acknowledges that airpower "is, at bottom, a blunt instrument designed to break things and kill people" and had its greatest effect against Yugoslavia's dual-use infrastructure. Lambeth is not prepared to consider the implications of such an airpower strategy, but Hosmer is. He concludes that "attacks or threats of attacks on 'dual-use' military targets may be the most effective—and in some instances the only feasible way—to coerce enemy decisionmakers to terminate conflicts and crises rapidly on terms acceptable to the United States." American political leaders must avoid incurring international and legal obligations that could limit such targeting options, while military leaders must continue to pursue ways to limit collateral damage and civilian casualties.

Echoing Giulio Douhet, Hosmer argues that infrastructure attacks can quickly end wars and save both friendly and enemy lives. He is surprised that Serb leaders viewed NATO air attacks as unconstrained while American airmen chafed under what they regarded as debilitating restrictions. However, many Europeans and most of the Third World held positions similar to the Serbs. U.S. leaders must realize that the international community views bombing differently. While briefers at the Pentagon stress the accuracy of precision guided munitions, other

observers recall the horror of Hamburg and Dresden or Tokyo and Hiroshima—memories that are actually evidence of the coercive influence of airpower.

Hosmer argues that the attacks on infrastructure also pressured Milosevic by weakening his control mechanisms and imposing costs on Serbian political elites, but the core of the campaign involved disabling an economy already eroded by sanctions. The author deserves praise for locating Serbian sources, which if believed, reveal that the fear of mass death or destruction was crucial to NATO success. Even if the goal of air attacks was coercion by increasing civilian hardships, it would still raise normative issues on the use of such a strategy. One Pentagon spokesman speculated that the main reason for air effectiveness "was the increasing inconveniences that the bombing campaign was causing in Belgrade and other cities." The inconveniences included nationwide power disruptions and the destruction of petroleum refineries, half of the television and radio broadcasting capacity, and more than half of the bridges over the Danube.

The implications of a strategy that targets infrastructure and threatens civilians, even when it represents an optimum use of airpower, are troubling. The U.N. International Criminal Tribunal considered investigating allegations of war crimes stemming from those attacks, and a committee of the British parliament observed that the Allied action was "of dubious legality in the current state of international law." Beyond such criticism, the air campaign generated a severe backlash against the West in Serbia. Rather than producing a quick victory, such a course of action may in fact encourage potential enemies to develop weapons of mass destruction. Some believe that this rationale motivates North Korea, most of whose cities were destroyed by American airpower between 1950 and 1953. **JFQ** 

The United States

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## STATECRAFT AND MARITIME POWER

A Book Review by THOMAS G. MAHNKEN

#### Seapower as Strategy: Navies and National Interests

by Norman Friedman
Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001.
352 pp. \$36.95
[ISBN: 1–55750–291–9]

A noted observer of naval and maritime affairs, Norman Friedman has produced a score of books and is a regular contributor to the *Proceedings of the U.S. Naval Institute.* In *Seapower as Strategy: Navies and National Interests,* he explores the strategic implications of naval power and echoes a maxim of Francis Bacon: "He that commandeth the sea is at great liberty and may take as much or as little of the war as he will."

The author maintains that the flexibility inherent in seapower is its greatest strategic asset. The way that navies contribute to success has changed little, according to Friedman. Drawing on events of the past three centuries, he discusses how navies engage enemy fleets, conduct blockades and embargoes, protect against invasion forces, and project power overseas.

The heart of Seapower as Strategy is an analysis of maritime power in two world wars and the Cold War. Moreover, Friedman looks at the role it might have played through a consideration of strategic alternatives available to belligerents. He concludes, for example, that the Gallipoli landing was flawed in execution, not concept. Had that amphibious operation succeeded, it might have kept Russia in the conflict, thus relieving German pressure on the western front. In opening up the Black Sea and the mouth of the Danube, it might also have allowed the Entente to knock Austria-Hungary out of the conflict.

On the other hand, Friedman may be too critical of the British commitment to the European continent, which robbed London of flexibility. He argues that Great Britain could have, or indeed

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should have, allowed Germany to overrun France. But while the British might have survived such a disaster, as it did in 1940, statesmen and soldiers clearly found this outcome unacceptable. That was not because of ignorance of seapower, but instead a recognition of the dire consequences of German dominance. In fact, this case illustrates that those nations that possess seapower are not always at liberty to take as much or as little of the war as they wish.

Another focus of Seapower as Strategy is coalition warfare. Friedman finds a natural division of labor between maritime power and continental allies. The United States, like Britain in the past, should remain an offshore balancer, with its allies fielding the bulk of land forces. Although perhaps correct in theory, the author ignores the practical difficulties of such a division. Continental allies have been reluctant to supply cannon fodder for a distant maritime power. Just as Britain discovered in the Napoleonic era, monetary inducements and naval support are often not enough to maintain coalitions. A maritime power must often put boots on the ground as much to demonstrate political commitment as to ensure military effectiveness.

Friedman is best when he turns to technology and force structure. Two appendices, worth the price of the book, offer a wealth of knowledge for laymen as well as experts. He speculates on the relevance of traditional concepts for network-centric operations, which he notes resemble conventional naval warfare. Unfortunately, he does not pursue the theme. More debatable is his contention that contemporary trends decrease the value of landpower and airpower and increase that of seapower. He may be right, but Kosovo and Afghanistan suggest otherwise.

The author offers little critical analysis of the theory of seapower advanced by Alfred Thayer Mahan, with its emphasis on decisive fleet engagement. Friedman chastises Britain, for example, for failing to press home maritime victories, yet he sidesteps the question of why a nation with seapower often fails to seek out and destroy enemies. Great Britain relied on the Royal Navy not only for power projection, but also to safeguard its shores from invasion. It is very well to claim that "it is our task to ensure that a decisive battle goes our way," but such statements are not helpful to leaders charged with providing national security. It is not surprising that dominant maritime powers

have frequently been reluctant to seek decisive victories.

Friedman tends to generalize when it is unwarranted. Is it really true that only rarely, if ever, has the United States fought to gain or retain territory? And the result of Enduring Freedom seems to contradict the claim that "we now lack the mass necessary to overrun, let alone occupy, even a moderate-size country." Moreover, he poses strange assertions, including that North Korea and India were in cahoots with Iraq during the Persian Gulf War. The latter point is particularly misplaced given that traditionally neutral India took the unprecedented step of granting landing rights to the United States during Desert Shield. But placing such reservations aside, Seapower as Strategy is a valuable synthesis of three centuries of war at sea.

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## CHINESE NAVAL POWER

A Book Review by LARRY M. WORTZEL

The Great Wall at Sea: China's Navy Enters the Twenty-First Century

By Bernard D. Cole
Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2001.
288 pp. \$34.95
[ISBN: 1–55750–239–0]

o fill a gap in literature on the People's Liberation Army (PLA), *The Great* Wall at Sea: China's Navy Enters the Twenty-First Century by Bernard Cole surveys the maritime tradition, defense base, and role of seapower in China. Despite its strengths, some of the judgments found in this book on the long-term intentions of the naval buildup are questionable. The author—who teaches at the National War College and served as a surface warfare officer-believes that China has limited goals while others, such as the reviewer, think they have strategic ambitions. But no one who follows maritime strategy and Chinese military affairs should ignore this book.

Cole thinks that a combination of strategic view, budget constraints, foreign relations, and domestic political affairs means China will modernize its force to become a strong regional rather than global navy. And he does not anticipate Beijing projecting its power around the world in the future. The author bases this conclusion in part on the contention that China has not traditionally maintained an overseas military presence.

There is little doubt about the long-term Chinese military involvement in the construction of launch facilities for intermediate range ballistic missiles in Saudi Arabia; there may still be PLA personnel supporting them. The Tan-Zam railway between Tanzania and Zambia was built by Chinese engineers as a foreign aid project. The Chinese People's Volunteers who invaded Korea remained on the peninsula for years after the war. And there were some 50,000 Chinese soldiers in North Vietnam during the Indochina conflict, and PLA forces constructed a

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U.S. Navy (Nathanael T. Miller)

road across northern Laos toward the Thai border. On such matters Cole seems to accept the official Chinese party line; part of his analysis minimizes the longterm military designs of Beijing.

The interpretation of Asian history in The Great Wall at Sea is also questionable. Chinese fleets carrying invasion forces attempted to penetrate Japan in 1274 and 1281. Only a typhoon, the proverbial kamikaze (divine wind), stopped their assault. The establishment of trading colonies around Asia and the Middle East were also based on naval power. Admiral Zheng He (1371-1433) led seven expeditions. His fleets included hundreds of ships and thousands of troops dispatched to impose the will of the Middle Kingdom on trading states. When a Chinese admiral showed up with more ships than had ever been seen and landing forces larger than the local military, requests for commercial treaties invariably followed. This hardly constitutes a pacific maritime tradition.

Moreover, Cole does not examine Chinese literature, but relies extensively on translations by the Foreign Broadcast Information Service and other sources. There is no reference to Chinese work in the notes or bibliography. When authors lack a working knowledge of the vernacular of their research, they normally enlist the services of a collaborator with the requisite linguistic skills. For this lapse, the Naval Institute Press bears some of the blame for not insisting on a

survey of the major PLA sources in the original language.

Scholarship aside, Cole is right when it comes to military-technical analysis. The Chinese defense industrial base remains weak. Moreover, Beijing has focused on other sectors, perhaps at the expense of near-term military expansion. As the author observes, China is buying what it needs for the navy. Because it cannot manufacture sophisticated turbine engines and power systems, it must depend on foreign sources. It is also unable to build precision targeting and combat management systems and so depends on the West and Russia.

Thus the picture is mixed. When it had the strongest fleets in the region, China exercised suzerainty over its neighbors. Today it is seeking an indigenous naval industrial complex. There is no reason to think that Beijing will limit its ambitions once its goals are met. All those interested in maritime power should read this book. However, its judgments on long-term intentions should be tempered by further study of Chinese military and naval history.

## WARS AND RUMORS OF WARS

A Book Review by JAMES JAY CARAFANO

## The Road to Rainbow: Army Planning for Global War, 1934–1940

by Henry G. Gole
Annapolis: Naval Institute Press, 2003.
256 pp. \$34.95
[ISBN: 1–55750–409–1]

Prawing on archives at the U.S. Army War College, Henry Gole has provided a revisionist interpretation of war planning on the eve of World War II. In *The Road to Rainbow* he argues that serious planning for coalition warfare began earlier than commonly assumed. In making his case, Gole assembles a wealth of new material on American preparations for global war, though his conclusion that Army leaders were then capable of meeting the challenges of a two-front war will likely spark lively debate.

War plans are developed in a shadowland. Preconflict planning does not usually capture the attention of historians for a good reason. The actions of states in a conflict often diverge from prewar thinking. Strictures considered inviolable fade once the first shot is fired. Nations at war find themselves acting in ways that they would not countenance in peacetime. Conversely, unconstrained planning without oversight tends to diverge from the art of the possible to little more than an academic exercise. Plans are so dissimilar from combat that they usually become footnotes to history. One exception is the Schlieffen Plan, which some believe was a catalyst for World War I.

Gole contends that the United States was better prepared for war than historians previously thought. Sidney Aster, for example, concluded in *Military Planning and the Origins of the Second World War* that "Americans felt so secure after the First World War that their planning, until 1938, was small scale and focused on hypothetical hostile powers." Not so, according to Gole. At least as early as 1934 the military was looking at realistic options for fighting Japan and later Germany. Long before Admiral Harold Stark,

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Chief of Naval Operations, promulgated his famous Plan Dog memorandum in 1940, Army thinking envisioned a twofront war, the need for coalition partners, and defeating Germany first.

Sorting through the contents of 25 footlockers at the U.S. Army War College, Gole found student papers from 1934 to 1940 on allied participation. Much of the research evaluated the Color Plans, predecessor to the better known Rainbow Plans, which a joint Army-Navy board began drafting in April 1940. While the papers concerned exercises, Gole claims that they were relevant to war planning. Before World War II, the college was located at Washington Barracks (now Fort Lesley J. McNair). Much of the research was done at the behest of the War Department, which tasked students to examine strategic planning. When the college closed its doors in 1940, faculty and many graduates were assigned to the war plans division. In addition, students who worked on Allied planning advanced to fill senior command and staff positions (Gole provides a detailed list of graduates in an appendix).

The Road to Rainbow contains a wealth of new information, but the book misses opportunities to explore its subject in detail because of its problematic organization and the failure to make full use of the research material on hand. Part one sketches the state of military preparedness, general staff planning, and educational activity between the wars. While interesting, this history is rehearsed elsewhere. It would have been more helpful if integrated into analyses of war planning exercises to illustrate the influence of real world events and constraints on student thinking.

The core of this book covers each year of the curriculum, from the study of war with Japan in 1934 to requirements for hemispheric defense in 1939. The balance of the chapters summarize events after the outbreak of hostilities and activities of the War Department. This chronological approach is tedious, and overarching themes of the work are easily lost.

The archives of the U.S. Army War College also include instructor critiques, student comments, and interaction with the War Department. This data provides evidence for assessing the worldview of men who fought long and hard on two fronts and shaped the Cold War. The plans should be sifted not only for insights on operational thinking but for notions on technological advances and geopolitics, as well as the assumptions that underpinned military decisions. Few

analyses of prewar planning root out such material in detail. *Arming Against Hitler: France and the Limits of Military Planning* by Eugenia Kiesling is one work that ventures into this area. Gole largely missed his chance.

Finally, the general conclusion of this book will likely provoke discussion. Gole finds that the skills of coalition warfare were ingrained in war college students and suffused in the thinking of the Army Staff. If true, it is unclear why participation in coalition planning in the opening years of the war was so flawed. The Army advocated a cross-channel invasion in 1942, which would have resulted in one of the greatest military disasters in history. The poor performance of American soldiers in North Africa should have been sufficient proof that they were not ready. In addition, if planners had such a thorough conception of global war in 1939, why were they outargued and outflanked by British planners at the Casablanca Conference in 1943?

Gole rightly draws attention to student work on the eve of Pearl Harbor. Yet too much can be made of the musings of war college students. Many of these officers had also attended the U.S. Army General Command and Staff College where the study of coalition operations during World War I led to the conclusion that "if we have to go to war again, let's do it without the allies."

In a work of related interest, *Allies* and *Adversaries: The Joint Chiefs of Staff,* the Grand Alliance, and U.S. Strategy in World War II, Mark Stoler looks at planning from 1939 to V–J Day. While finding that the military was not devoid of intellectual horsepower to conceptualize global warfare, he perceives less coherence than *The Road to Rainbow* would lead readers to expect.

There are wars and rumors of wars—and there are war plans. Each has a place in military history. *The Road to Rainbow* is a powerful reminder that coalition planning is essential to grooming strategic leaders. The years leading to World War II provide a valuable case study on harnessing the instruments of national power in a changing world.

